Steps to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions on Dairy Farms

The actions in yellow reduce methane

The actions in blue reduce nitrous oxide

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Create a Nutrient Management Plan with your advisor	Use sire advice on ICBF for bull selection this Spring	Spread Protected Urea - it's cheaper than CAN							Allow topped hedges to grow at least 1.5 meters tall and allow a thorn sapling to grow		Time to soil sample your farm
Test your slurry for nutrient content	Aim to spread at least 75% of your slurry in the Spring using Low Emission Slurry Spreading to increase nitrogen recovery			Monitor breeding performance to ensure fertility targets are met						Spread soiled water after grazings and on paddcoks surplus bales were taken off during the year	
	Aim to calf heifers aged 22-26 months with a 20% replacement rate	Vaccinate cows and heifers for BVD, IBR and Lepto		Use DBI when using beef AI bulls to increase value of beef calves	Time to spread lime on silage fields after 1st cut silage		Vaccinate cows and heifers for Salmonella	Scan all cows and bulling heifers - cull empty cows	Test silage and match concentrate feeding rate		Vaccinate cows and heifers for Salmonella
	①Complete a milk recording	Aim to have 60% grazed by 17th March	②Complete a milk recording		③Complete a milk recording		④Complete a milk recording		⑤Complete a milk recording for drying off data		Time to dry off cows - aim for 305 day lactation. Check ICBF report
			Reduce nitrogen on clover swards								
Spread lime where needed		Spread Ps & Ks where needed and reduce chemical N by 10% And spread Sulphur -little and often							Spread lime where needed		
①Weigh weanlings and draft out under performing animals for special attention	Do a grass farm walk and a Spring Rotation plan and aim to have 30% grazed by 1st March	②Time to weigh yearlings	Consider using Sexed Semen on your best cows - check milk recording results		Check fodder stocks after 1st cut	③Time to weigh calves		Do a grass farm walk and a Autumn Rotation plan	④Time to weigh calves	Do a closing grass cover & check your annual tonnage report	Create a herd health plan for next year
		Do a grass walk weekly									
		On reseeding ground include clover @ 2kgs/acre in the grass seed mix or oversow clover into suitable paddocks							Spread Muriate Potash (K) where needed when closing paddocks		Order Protetcted Urea for next Spring

Closed Periods*	Slurry	Chemical Fertiliser	Farm Yard Manure
Zone A	1st Oct-12th Jan	15th Sept-26th Jan	1st Nov-12th Jan
Zone B	1st Oct-15th Jan	15th Sept-29th Jan	1st Nov-15th Jan
Zone C	1st Oct-31st Jan	15th Sept-14th Feb	1st Nov-31st Jan
Buffer Strips	Slurry=5 meters(10 meters for the first 2 weeks & last 2 weeks of spreading season) Chemical Fertiliser = 2 meters		

*These dates are applicable until 2025

The above calendar is a suggestion for dairy farmers to reduce emissions of their farms. The actions in blue reduce nitrous oxide emissions and the actions in yellow reduce methane emissions. This calendar was developed by Niamh Dunphy as part of a Masters in Agricultural Innovation Support.

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Publish Date: 25th April 2023.

12 steps to reduce emissions